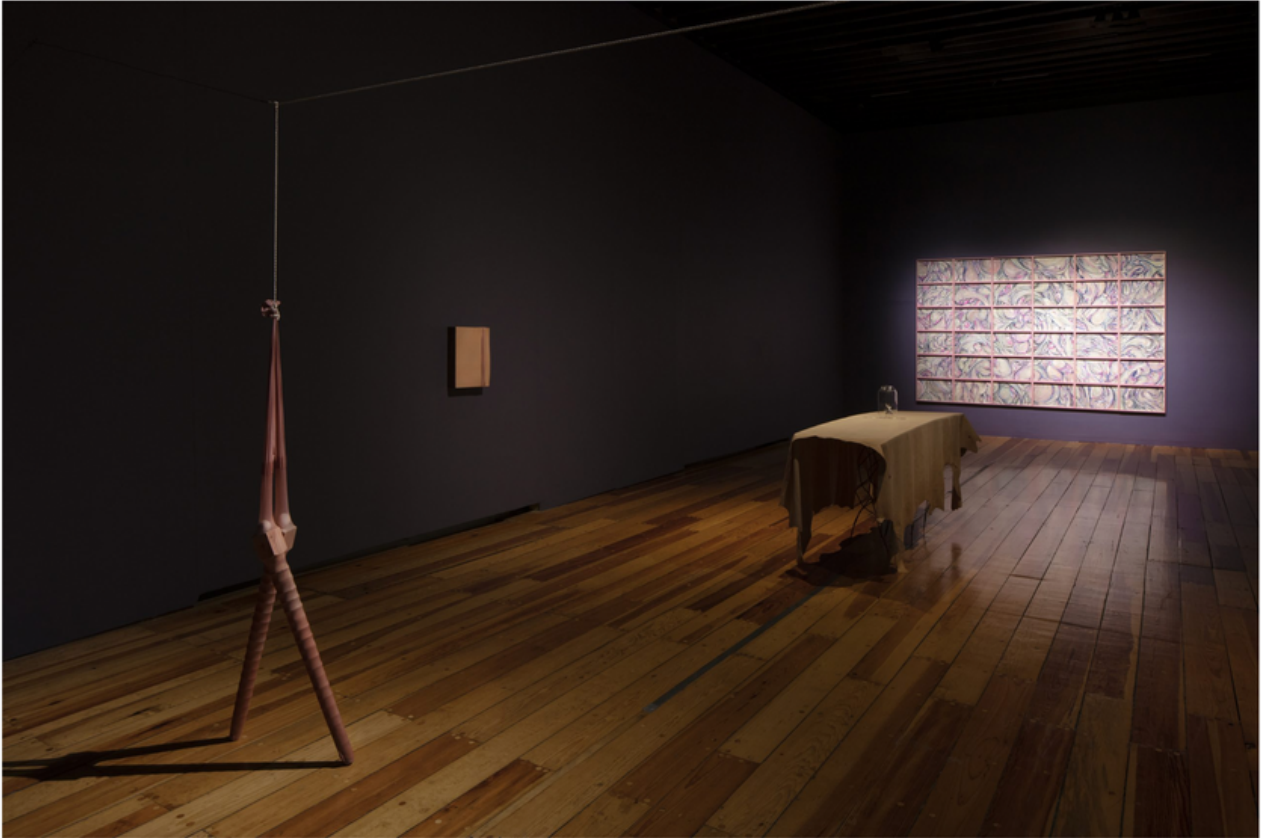


sculpture

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Martín Soto Climent, installation view of "El sendero del poeta," 2023. Photo: Whitebalance, Courtesy the artist and Museo de la Ciudad de México

Martín Soto Climent

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Mexico City

Museo de la Ciudad de México

"El sendero del poeta" ("The path of the poet"), Martín Soto Climent's first showing at a public institution in Mexico since 2015, presented the multidisciplinary artist's most recent body of work, as well as reworkings of pieces originating earlier in his practice—back to 2002. A master of found objects and subtle nuance, Soto Climent pursues the changeable and the ephemeral; many of his works offer the possibility of being transformed.

This idea of unmaking some of his works stems from one of his central concerns—that the objects used nearly always have the potential to return to their original state. *Almas rasgadas* offers a good example of this principle, while challenging traditional boundaries between sculpture and painting. In this four-part work, Soto Climent placed tights on top of pristine white canvases, forming temporary pictures with the potential to be undone (and remade in different form) by simply removing the tights while leaving the canvas intact.

The act of non-imposition remains a priority for Soto Climent, who lives and works in Tepoztlán, a small mountain town about 90 minutes south of the city, where he is in close contact with nature. This show was an attempt to return to origins, to find the vital energy that unites us. Presented in four rooms, the careful and coherent selection of 27 pieces ranged from installation and sculptural objects to two-dimensional works on canvas and paper. Clear connections could be drawn between the works, which were poetically bound together by a common thread that wasn't just metaphorical.

In the first room, *Eterno encanto del primer silencio* (2007–22), consisting of a burnt bird cage with blue feathers and a branch, hung from a rope. From the bird cage, this rope extended all the way to the last room, where it connected to *Soñadores sonámbulos* (2022), an ensemble in which two pink-stockinged table legs, each with an egg on top, appeared to be caught in mid-stride. Half-way between these two points, the rope's journey was punctuated by a genuine pink rose. This magical arrangement created a true poem of an installation, its separately mundane elements transformed into a beautiful and surreal vision.

Collected with delicate and precise gestures, the small, ordinary objects that composed “El sendero del poeta” prompted intimate encounters and imaginings. Heels, hair bands, false eyelashes, stockings, and necklaces—presented in an almost performative way—invited viewers to reflect on gender, the erotic, the sensual, and desire. Soto Climent took full advantage of the space at his disposal, turning the exhibition into a work of art in itself. Using a limited number of repeated elements, he carefully orchestrated the show so that viewers could sense a narrative, not literal or obvious perhaps, but as he says: “a kind of intensification of a recorded substance, framed or contained by the pieces, and you feel it among all.” For Soto Climent, this vital energy runs through and across works (as in life). He does not consider one piece more important than another; rather each one has its place and its moment.